

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-13, 15-29, 31, 32 and 34-48 are pending. In the Office Action, the finality of the prior Office Action was withdrawn, the Examiner prosecuting the rejection changed, the Abstract of the Disclosure was objected to as containing more than 150 words, and the claims were subject to a restriction requirement. For the restriction requirement, claims 1-5, 7-13, 15-25 and 42-48 were stated as being drawn to a first invention (I) comprising a charge number issuing system as classified in class 705, subclass 44, and claims 26-29, 31, 32, and 34-41 were stated as being drawn to a second invention (II) comprising a transaction system for authorizing valid charge numbers as classified in class 705, subclass 44.

A telephonic interview was conducted between Examiner Colbert and Applicant's representative, Gary Stanford (Reg. No. 35,689) on Monday, October 4, 2004. During the interview, Applicant attempted to clarify the subject matter of the claims. The Examiner clarified the restriction requirement and suggested a claim amendment approach that might enable the claims to proceed without restriction. The Examiner's suggestion was to amend the claims to more particularly reference and incorporate both an issuing system and a transaction system as provided in the subclasses 26 and 44 of class 705. The Examiner stated that such an amendment might enable the claims to proceed without restriction.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the interview and for clarifying the restriction requirement. Applicant has attempted to amend the claims herein in conformance with the Examiner's suggestion. In doing so, Applicant has not strictly complied with the restriction requirement of the Office Action. For the record, Applicant

would have elected with traverse the claims 1-5, 7-13, 15-25 and 42-48 of the first invention I. Also, given the claim amendments, Applicant amends the Title and the Abstract to more clearly conform to the amended claims and to overcome the objection to the Abstract of the Disclosure.

Claim 1 is amended to more clearly recite a method of issuing *and transacting* charge numbers. In particular, the preamble is amended to recite a “method of issuing and transacting charge numbers” and each method claim element (e.g., receiving, storing, detecting, etc.) previously referencing the “issuing system” is amended to refer to an “issuing and transaction system”. Claims 2-5, 7, 8, 13, 15-21 and 23-25 are amended to conform to amended claim 1.

In a similar manner, claim 26 is amended to recite a “charge number issuing and transaction system for issuing and authorizing valid charge numbers via a electronic communications network.” Also, claim 26 is amended by replacing the “transaction system” to an “issuing and transaction system” for clarification. Note that the preamble of claim 26 is further amended to recite that the issuing and transaction system is for issuing and authorizing valid charge numbers, and that the issuing and transaction system further issues a selected valid charge number in response to a user request. Claims 27-29, 32, 35, 36, 38, and 39 are amended in conformance with the amendment to claim 26 by replacing the “transaction system” to an “issuing and transaction system”.

In a similar manner, claim 42 is amended to recite a “charge number issuing and processing system for issuing valid charge numbers via a electronic communications network and for processing the valid charge numbers via a charge settlement network” including an “issuing and transaction system” and a “switch network”, in which the

switch network “routes any of the plurality of valid charge numbers entered into the charge settlement network to the issuing and transaction system for processing.”

Applicant submits that these amendments to the claims are in accordance with the Examiner’s suggestion to amend the claims to include both subclasses 44 and 26 of class 705 including a charge number issuing system and a transaction system for authorizing valid charge numbers, respectively. Applicant submits that these amendments are in accordance with that suggested by the Examiner and requests approval of these amendments and withdrawal of the restriction requirement.

The Abstract of the Disclosure was objected to as including more than 150 words. The Abstract is replaced with a new Abstract that is less than 150 words (149 words) and that is more directed to the claims as amended. Applicant requests approval of the new Abstract.

Although not objected to, the Title of the Invention is also replaced with a new Title “CHARGE NUMBER ISSUING AND TRANSACTION SYSTEM AND METHOD” which reflects the amendments to the claims. Applicant requests approval of the new Title.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that for the reasons recited above and for various other reasons, the present application is in a condition for allowance and reconsideration is respectfully requested. Should this response be considered inadequate or non-responsive for any reason, or should the Examiner have any questions, comments or suggestions that would expedite the prosecution of the present case to allowance, Applicants' undersigned representative earnestly requests a telephone conference at (512) 295-8050.

Respectfully submitted,

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